

Message Text

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USEUCOM VAIHINGEN
USAREUR HEIDELBERG

UNCLAS STUTTGART 0917

USEUCOM AND USAREUR FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: FILBINGER LAWSUIT: SUPPORTERS RALLY ROUND

REF: STUTTGART 0905

1. SUPPORTERS OF BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG MINISTER-PRESIDENT FILBINGER ARE BEGINNING TO SPEAK OUT IN HIS SUPPORT TO OFFSET SOME OF THE BAD PUBLICITY RESULTING FROM LAWSUIT REPORTED REFTEL. (COVERAGE REMAINS HEAVY IN THE LOCAL PRESS.) PRESS REPORTS REMARKS MADE MAY 10 BY STUTTGART'S CDU LORD MAYOR, MANFRED ROMMEL, STATING THAT IN HIS OPINION FILBINGER CLEARLY WAS NO NAZI AND ALSO HAD DONE WHAT HE COULD AS A JUDGE TO HELP OTHERS DURING HIS TOUR IN THE GERMAN NAVY. ROMMEL SAID IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR MANY NOW
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TO VISUALIZE WHAT CONDITIONS HAD BEEN UNDER THE THIRD REICH AND THE INEVITABLE PRESSURES THAT WERE THEN BROUGHT TO BEAR THAT INFLUENCED CONDUCT, AND HE WONDERED HOW ANYONE TODAY COULD CREDIBLY ARGUE THAT HE WOULD HAVE ACTED DIFFERENTLY IN 1945 IF HE HAD BEEN IN FILBINGER'S PLACE.

2. POLITICAL SCIENTIST THEODOR ESCHENBURG HAS PUBLISHED AN OPEN

LETTER TO SPD LAND CHAIRMAN EPPLER STATING THAT REGARDLESS OF HOW ONE MIGHT DIFFER POLITICALLY WITH FILBINGER, THE LATTER'S PUBLIC RECORD FOR THE PAST TWENTY YEARS CLEARLY DOES NOT JUSTIFY TRYING TO DRAW CONCLUSIONS NOW OVER HIS CONDUCT OF THIRTY YEARS AGO.

3. CIRCLE OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT STUDENTS IN BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG ISSUED STATEMENTS DEFENDING FILBINGER AGAINST WHAT IS DESCRIBED AS "CHARACTER ASSASSINATION CAMPAIGN."

4. COMMENT: AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, WHAT IS AT ISSUE BASICALLY IS NOT WHETHER FILBINGER WAS OR WAS NOT FRIENDLY TO NAZI CAUSE, BUT RATHER WHETHER HE EXERCISED WHAT LATITUDE WAS PRESUMABLY WITHIN HIS POWER TO EXERCISE AT THE TIME INSTEAD OF SIMPLY COMPLYING WITH ORDERS FROM HIGHER AUTHORITY WITHIN THE NAZI REGIME. IT IS THIS QUESTION ESSENTIALLY THAT ROMMEL HAS ADDRESSED. CLAIMING THAT ANYONE ELSE IN THE SAME SITUATION MIGHT HAVE DONE THE SAME IS OF COURSE NOT, ON ITS MERITS, A VERY STRONG DEFENSE, BUT ROMMEL IS AN IMMENSELY POPULAR FIGURE AND THE MERE FACT HE HAS SPOKEN OUT IN DEFENSE OF FILBINGER WOULD, ONE EXPECT, CARRY WEIGHT WITH PUBLIC OPINION HEREABOUTS.MILLER

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